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ABSTRACT

This publication presents the findings and conclusions as well as policy recommendations for a California State University (CSU) policy on student outcomes assessment. The report was formulated based on 16 meetings to study and discuss assessment issues, to review material from the campuses and to provide guidance to CSU representatives serving on an assessment study group advisory to the California Postsecondary Commission. Chapter 1, "CSU Involvement with Student Outcomes Assessment" defines outcomes assessment, describes the undergraduate education reform movement, conferences, assessment projects and committee work on the issue, and state government interest. Chapter 2, "Factors Contributing to Interest in Student Outcomes Assessment" offers statements by leaders illustrating concerns about assessment and description of actions by governmental and professional agencies. Chapter 3, "Guiding Principles for Assessing Student Outcomes in the CSU," describes the reasons for adopting the twelve principles that guided response to external agencies and proposal of recommendations. Chapter 4, "Recommendations for a California State University Assessment Policy" contains 15 recommendations that seek to balance various objectives and responsibilities. Three appendixes contain current assessment practices at CSU, a summary of responses to a survey, and a bibliography of over 50 items. (JB)

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STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

in THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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CSU

A REPORT TO THE CHANCELLOR

from the

Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment

DECEMBER 1989

HE 025 748

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CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning
and
ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education

The California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning (CSU/ITL) facilitates a 20-campus network of teaching and learning programs in the CSU system. ERIC/HE has entered into an agreement with CSU/ITL to process documents produced by the system and create a mini-collection within the ERIC database.

Major objectives of this initiative are as follows:

- increase awareness of the work of the CSU Institute for Teaching and Learning;
- increase access to the work of CSU/ITL affiliates;
- begin to build a subset of information on teaching and learning that supports *The National Teaching and Learning Forum (NTLF)*, ERIC/HE's newsletter;
- encourage use of the ERIC system by CSU/ITL member affiliates and the *NTLF* readership; and
- test a model for collaboration between ERIC/HE and a major higher education system.

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STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Report of the California State University Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment

Bernard Goldstein
Chair

December 1989

Academic Affairs, Plans and Programs
Office of the Chancellor
The California State University
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CAlifornia 90802

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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
(213) 590-

August 21, 1989

Dr. W. Ann Reynolds
Chancellor
The California State University
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802

Dear Chancellor Reynolds:

Enclosed please find the final report of the California State University Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment. This report summarizes the Committee's findings and conclusions and makes recommendations for a California State University policy on student outcomes assessment.

The Committee met sixteen times over a period of more than a year to study and discuss assessment issues, to review material received from the campuses and to provide guidance to CSU representatives serving on an assessment study group advisory to the California Postsecondary Commission.

Our approach has been to engage all campus constituencies in wide ranging discussions of ideas, concerns and points of contention related to outcomes assessment. Campus views were solicited and carefully reviewed and synthesized by the Committee. The experience and recommendations of faculty involved in experimental assessment programs and projects were considered. The several tension points (e.g. workload issues, availability of resources, definitions and values of assessment) were vigorously debated in a systemwide conference on assessment.

Preliminary drafts of guiding principles for assessment in the CSU were distributed to Campus Senates, the California State Student Association, the systemwide Academic Senate, the Presidents and the Vice Presidents. Draft recommendations were discussed with campus faculty and administrators at regional meetings in northern and southern California. At each step of our deliberations, we received and incorporated many suggestions for improvements in the guidelines and recommendations.

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The recommendations in this report reflect Committee members' consensus on the best approach to student outcomes assessment for The California State University. We believe they are consistent with what has been found to be most effective and beneficial in assessment programs implemented around the country. We are hopeful that they will provide useful guidance to campuses and serve to encourage faculty to seize the agenda on assessment.

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to all on the campuses, in the Office of the Chancellor, and outside of CSU who have assisted in its work. We are particularly indebted to the individual committee members for the time and talent they have committed to a task that has at times been exhilarating, and at times plodding. We have gained valuable insights into assessment and stand ready to discuss our recommendations at your request. We are particularly concerned that discussions about assessment on the campus continue. We hope that consultation on this report will promote such discussion.

Sincerely yours,

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CHAPTER ONE

CSU INVOLVEMENT WITH STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

In November 1987 Chancellor Reynolds established an Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment and charged its members with: studying student outcomes assessment and advising the Chancellor on policies related thereto; coordinating responses to the California Postsecondary Education Commission in connection with its study of outcomes assessment; and submitting a report and recommendations for directions the CSU should take with regard to outcomes assessment.

This report seeks to:

1. Identify the external and internal factors that contribute to the interest in outcomes assessment;

2. Interpret the implications of emerging assessment programs for the CSU;

3. Summarize important actions and activities related to outcomes assessment that have occurred within the CSU at the system level; and

4. Recommend specific assessment policies, strategies and practices the Committee believes are appropriate and of significant potential benefit to the CSU.

Definition of Student Outcomes Assessment

A major difficulty in discussing "student outcomes assessment" is the lack of a common definition. It has become, in the words of Terry W. Hartle (p. 4), "a catch-all phrase that refers to a wide range of efforts to improve educational quality."For all of its vagueness, however, a rapidly expanding inventory of institutional practices and critical studies clearly distinguishes student outcomes assessment from narrower applications of the term "assessment" used prior to the emergence of national discussion in 1985.

For purposes of this report, the Advisory Committee has adopted the definition of student outcomes assessment formulated by Carol M. Boyer and Peter T. Ewell in their analysis of assessment in undergraduate education undertaken for the Education Commission of the States:

> Any process of gathering concrete evidence about the impact and functioning of undergraduate education. The term can apply to processes that provide information about individual students, about curricula or programs, about institutions or about entire systems of institutions. The term encompasses a range of procedures, including testing, survey methods, performance measures or feedback to individual students, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative information.
> (Carol M. Boyer and Peter T. Ewell. "State-Based Approaches to Assessment in Undergraduate Education: A Glossary and Selected References." Denver: Education Commission of the States, March 1988.)

Student outcomes assessment differs from conventional testing practices, program review and accreditation processes in an important respect. It seeks to employ what can be discovered about actual current/former student learning, skills, attitudes, behaviors and opinions--if possible over time--in illuminating and evaluating the effectiveness of the educational programs in helping students achieve the goals and objectives for those programs. Outcomes assessment attempts to provide, whether at the level of the individual course, program or institution, information to answer the question: What do you expect of your students and how do you know if they are meeting your expectations?

CSU and the Undergraduate Education Reform Movement

The CSU, in cooperation with the California Postsecondary Education Commission, hosted the western regional dissemination conference of the report on *Involvement in Learning* in May 1985. In response to the call for reform and improvement voiced at this conference and to the stream of studies critical of higher education, the CSU Academic Senate undertook a year-long study of undergraduate education in the CSU. That study concluded that the CSU should accord greater priority to research on teaching and learning and recommended establishment of a systemwide Teacher-Scholar Institute.

Through their recommendations on assessment, some national studies, including *Involvement in Learning* and *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, conferred instant celebrity on a small number of colleges and universities that had developed programs to evaluate the quality of educational programs by looking at output rather than input measures. During the summer of 1985, Chancellor's staff and Academic Senate leaders agreed to investigate the assessment models that were attracting national attention.

The First CSU Assessment Conference

In consultation with campus administrators and the Academic Senate, "Program Development," with strong emphasis on the evaluation of outcomes, was adopted as a category for Academic Program Improvement grants in 1986-87. To inform the development of the grant proposals, and to stimulate debate on outcomes assessment by affected campus constituencies, a systemwide conference was held in October 1986. Its primary purpose was to identify the essential characteristics of emerging assessment theories and practices and the contexts out of which they grew. Faculty and administrators associated with state assessment models in Tennessee, New Jersey, Missouri, and Florida discussed the reasons and processes leading to the adoption of these programs, the rationales for the program designs, and the costs and effects of their implementation. The conference proceedings were published in the New Directions for Higher Education series by Jossey-Bass under the title, *Student Outcomes Assessment: What Institutions Stand to Gain* (edited and introduced by Dr. Diane Halpern).

An informal survey of the campus teams at the end of the academic year indicated that follow-up activities, ranging from formal reports to the establishment of university assessment committees, had occurred on almost every CSU campus.

Experimental Assessment Projects

As of spring 1989, eleven outcomes assessment projects on ten CSU campuses have been supported through grants from the Academic Program Improvement Fund. The directors of the 1986-87 projects were selected to make presentations at the Third National Assessment Conference in Chicago in the summer of 1988. With their appearance, a California presence was established in what had been a movement dominated largely by eastern institutions. CSU faculty and administrators presented a panel discussion on the development of outcomes assessment policy and programs in the CSU at the 1989 Conference of the American Association of Higher Education. Faculty associated with assessment activities on CSU campuses were on the program of the Fourth National Assessment Conference in June 1989.

Interest in Sacramento

School reform legislation in the wake of the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) had focused the attention of California lawmakers on the conditions of education in the state, and on the performance of its public institutions. The establishment, in 1984, of a blue ribbon commission to study the community colleges (SB 2064, Stiern) and to review the California Master Plan for Higher Education (SB 1570, Nielsen) signaled the intent to scrutinize postsecondary education with equal thoroughness.

State legislators' keen interest in the implications of the assessment movement for educational improvement in California became evident in the spring of 1986. In March, Assemblyman Tom Hayden, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, published *Beyond the Master Plan: A New Vision for Higher Education in California*, a call for California to adopt features of outcomes assessment programs developed in other states. Since 1986 Assemblyman Hayden has authored several bills proposing the establishment of mandatory outcomes assessment programs. In 1987, Senator Marion Bergeson introduced legislation to require standardized testing of candidates for teaching credentials.

The Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment

By mid-1987, assessment had become a major educational and public policy issue in California. Conferences on assessment were sponsored by the California Assembly and the California Community Colleges. In the CSU, the Academic Senate devoted a session of its fall retreat to the topic and appointed a former Senate chair as special advisor on assessment issues. The California State Student Association agendized debates on outcomes assessment over the course of academic year 1987-88 and passed a resolution supporting outcomes assessment in January 1988. CSU faculty and administrators served on a CPEC advisory committee to make

recommendations regarding outcomes assessment to the California Legislature. In 1987, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges revised its standards for accreditation to require evidence of program effectiveness in institutional self studies.

In order to monitor and interpret these developments, and to coordinate CSU responses to them, Chancellor Reynolds appointed an Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment. Its members included representatives from the Academic Senate (3), the California State Student Association (2), campus administration (2), the alumni association (1), and Chancellor's Office staff (2). Since its initial meeting in December 1988, the Committee has completed the tasks described below.

1. Survey of Campus Views on Assessment

   Committee members reviewed the literature on outcomes assessment, deliberated the issues and evidence available to them, and sought to clarify their implications for the CSU. Based on this study, and on responses to a survey of campus opinion about the recommendations contained in Assembly Bill 2016 (Coded Memorandum APPS 87-31), the Committee drafted a set of guiding principles. Chapter three of this report sketches the considerations that led to their formulation. The principles were circulated widely among faculty and administrators for review and comment. The statement of principles, thus evolved, served to guide the Committee in responding to requests for advice from the California Postsecondary Education Commission and in shaping recommendations for system policy on outcomes assessment.

2. Response to the Legislature

   Supplementary language to the Budget Act of 1987 required the CSU to report to the Legislature progress made "toward adoption and implementation of comprehensive outcomes assessment mechanisms for evaluating student learning, program effectiveness and institutional accomplishment of mission." The Committee provided guidance to Chancellor's staff regarding the content and direction of that report. Included in the response to Budgetary Language was a summary of current assessment practices in the CSU, included in this report as Attachment A.

3. Advice to the California Postsecondary Education Commission

   The Committee prepared a report to CPEC summarizing campus responses to specific provisions of AB 2016, and urging the Commission to adopt for California the principles recommended by the Committee. The summary of campus input on AB 2016 is included as Attachment B. The CSU Advisory Committee was active in reviewing and commenting on CPEC drafts during the entire period of the CPEC study.

4. Consultation with CSU Constituencies

   Committee members recognized that the sophistication about assessment acquired by faculty and administrators participating in assessment projects and conferences was not widely shared by CSU faculty. This was seen as a major obstacle to the practical usefulness of any positive recommendations the Committee might make. To probe the receptivity toward outcomes assessment with faculty and administrators whose understanding and acceptance would be determinative in implementing recommendations to develop assessment programs, the Committee assisted in planning and conducting the Second CSU Conference on Assessment (November 1988 at Lake Arrowhead).

   The conference revealed that the number of CSU faculty and administrators knowledgeable about assessment and supportive of many of its purposes was larger than the Committee had anticipated. It also confirmed strong negative reaction to assessment on the part of some faculty. The principal objections expressed were: demands to develop and implement outcomes assessment programs would impose unreasonable additional burdens on faculty; information produced through assessment programs would be of little value to faculty; and data could be misused in ways detrimental to individuals, programs or campuses.

In keeping with the view that the Committee's recommendations should be grounded in the realities of institutional life on CSU campuses and build upon widely shared values, the Committee sponsored regional meetings to enable anyone in the CSU who felt strongly about assessment or about the Committee's recommendations to be heard.

Members of the Committee met in April 1989, with students, faculty and administrators on the Humboldt, Sacramento and Fullerton campuses to discuss the draft recommendations. These discussions helped to determine the form, content, and recommendations of this report.

CHAPTER TWO

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INTEREST IN STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

A variety of factors have contributed to the growth of interest in assessment. The following statements by leaders outside and inside the academy illustrate the major concerns behind the call for alternative means to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs and institutions. The Committee interprets these statements to be a recognition of changing circumstances and evolving priorities, rather than criticisms of the contributions or dedication of individual faculty members.

Integrity of the Baccalaureate Degree

By failing to articulate the shared objectives of a liberal education or to discuss how they are related to individual courses in the curriculum, faculties can easily lose sight of their common purposes. In such an atmosphere, important aims acknowledged by all, such as the ability to communicate precisely or to reason carefully, remain the responsibility of no one.
(Derek Bok. *Higher Learning*, 1986)

The major in most colleges is little more than a gathering of courses taken in one department, lacking structure and depth . . . or emphasizing content to the neglect of the essential style of inquiry on which the content is based. . . . Another victim of this posture of irresponsibility is the general education of the American college undergraduate, the institutional course requirements outside the major. They lack a rationale and cohesion. . . . It is as if no one cared, so long as the store stays open.
(Arnold B. Arons, Ernest L. Boyer, et al., Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees. *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, 1985)

Many factors have contributed to the tendency of colleges and universities to place less emphasis on explicit, common educational characteristics for the baccalaureate degree. They include the enormous expansion in the number of institutions and students in American higher education in the postwar period, growing diversity of the student population, rapid shifts in federal and state funding policies and priorities, cultural changes that impact the academic readiness of college bound students and the values supporting their commitment to higher education, increasing suspicion of authority, institutional adjustments to declining enrollment in the seventies, and the evolution of disciplinary research.

These influences have exerted competing pressures on the loyalties and priorities of college and university faculty. The institutional processes that worked to assure integrity of the degree--curriculum approval, personnel review, evaluation of student work--are less effective where faculty hold diverse understandings of the goals and values of the institution and its programs and of how to relate them to a very diverse student population with differing goals and values.

Improved Means to Evaluate Teaching and Learning

We must overcome the lazy habit of grading and scoring "on the curve" as a cheap way of setting and upholding standards. Such a practice is unrelated to any agreed-upon intellectual standards and can reveal only where students stand in relation to one another. It tells us nothing about where they ought to be. Moreover, students are left with only a letter or number -- with nothing to learn from.
(Grant Wiggins, Senior Associate, National Center on Education and the Economy. "A True Test: Toward More Authentic and Equitable Assessment" in *Phi Kappa Deltan*, May 1989)

[The development and implementation of student outcomes assessment] has made faculty members teaching in the Interdisciplinary General Educational Program more aware of their interdependence. . . . The exercise of publicly discussing and putting on paper the outcomes expected of specific courses and the pedagogical strategies that will produce them has nurtured cooperation. . . . [As a result of the assessment activities,] the end of the quarter is no longer perfunctory; it is an important time to complete connections that have been building over the term. . . . The outcome of autonomous learning has been reinforced through student outcomes assessment. Experience with assessment has empowered students to do this.
(Andrew I. Moss, Professor of English, California State Polytechnic University,

Pomona. Third National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, June 1988)

Research in assessment has led to the emergence of promising new approaches and techniques for analyzing and measuring student learning and other developmental changes associated with higher education. As a result, there are better and better ways for faculty to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching and there are better ways for educational institutions and accrediting agencies to analyze the quality and performance of programs. Thoughtfully developed outcomes assessment programs have demonstrated significant potential for improving communication between faculty and students, enhancing learning and helping faculty and staff reach consensus on changes to improve the quality and performance of programs.

Global Competitiveness

There has never been a time in American life, when legislators have believed as firmly that higher education is a central vehicle for dealing with a number of problems critical to the future of the region, state, nation. They want equity and excellence. This is an unprecedented challenge. No other country has attempted to do this.
(Frank Newman, President, Education Commission of the States. Third National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, June 1988)

Everyone thinks we in America are number one. . . The process of falling behind is only discovered after it's happened, not while it's happening and we're resting on our laurels.
(Assemblyman Tom Hayden, dialogue with John Ashcroft moderated by Frank Newman. AAHE National Conference, March 1987)

State governments fear profound erosion in the quality of life as production moves offshore, imports gain larger shares of the domestic market, and foreign capital exerts greater influence over the national economy. They are looking to colleges and universities to equip graduates with the understandings and skills to meet the technological and managerial challenges connected with the transition to a global economy.

Declining Educational Achievement

We are being asked to do a better job with more students who are less well prepared and who will be called upon to do more on the job. . . . We have more students who are more dependent on the performance of the institution.
(Bob McCabe, President, Miami-Dade College. Third National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, Chicago, June 1988)

The perception has become commonplace that diplomas and degrees from American schools and colleges no longer guarantee possession of basic literacy and numeracy. Critical reports from business, industry and the military echo news of declining scores on several indices of educational achievement: e.g., college aptitude tests, professional and graduate school admission tests, teacher credential tests, and international comparisons of abilities in math, science and geography. At the elementary and secondary levels, this has led to the imposition of mandatory testing programs. In the absence of more appropriate methods, some states have imposed similarly draconian measures on colleges and universities.

Demographic Changes in American Society

It is not true that access causes a decline in the quality of higher education. However, access without quality is a cruel deception, while quality without access is a betrayal of the cherished American ideal of equal opportunity. . . . The nation simply cannot afford to sacrifice the next generation of emerging Americans in the name of quality enhancement. (George Deukmejian, Michael Dukakis, John Ashcroft, et al., Task Force on College Quality. *Time For Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*, 1986)

States are worried about the emergence of a two-tiered society in which a large underclass, defined along racial or ethnic lines, is unprepared for constructive participation in a technological, information-based economy. Maintenance of a stable economic and political environment requires that all segments of society share in its benefits. Formal education is the principal gateway to such participation.

Changing Views of Educational Quality

The chief challenge facing higher education is not just the need to improve public understanding of the academy. The academy must want to perform better in substantive matters in order to

serve the public interest more effectively. This can best be undertaken by building bridges between our colleges and universities and the enormous problems that face American society and the world.
(Gary H. Quehl, President, Council for Advancement and Support of Education. "Higher Education and the Public Interest" in *Academe*, September-October 1988)

The capacity for higher education to be a positive change agent in American society will depend upon our ability to transcend our institutional egos, our narcissism, and our self-interest, and to concern ourselves more directly with the impact we are having on our students and communities.
(Alexander Astin, Director, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA Graduate School of Education. Third National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, June 1988)

As state governments increasingly recognize the close links between the university and the economic and social well being of their states/regions, they look at the performance of public universities in a changing light. Criticism of the "reputational" or "resource" notions of educational excellence, as distinct from the "outcomes" or "talent development" model, has found a very positive reception from public policy makers. The call to measure the contributions of an institution by how much and how well its students are learning and how the college experience is affecting their values and attitudes, speaks directly to the concerns of state governments.

Rising Costs

We need not just more money for higher education, we need more education for the money.
(John Ashcroft, Governor of Missouri, Chairman, Task Force on College Quality, National Governors' Association. *Time For Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*, 1986)

In recent years the cost of a college degree has risen at a rate higher than the index of inflation. Nationally, this is occurring at a time of dwindling federal resources. In California, the Gann Limit has capped state spending in the face of increased demand for services. The effects of this policy will be exacerbated by the implementation of Proposition 98. State government must determine what share of fixed resources shall be allocated to meet diverse social needs. Elected officials are forced to make painful choices and they want clear, comprehensible evidence of institutional effectiveness upon which to base their decisions.

Accountability

Each campus should assess whether the receipt of a baccalaureate degree signifies the acquisition of a core of knowledge, along with the development of abilities to use that knowledge effectively. . . . A more rigorous undergraduate program will require high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools to do a better job of preparing students to perform college level work.
(George Deukmejian, Michael Dukakis, John Ashcroft, et al., Task Force on College Quality. *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education*, 1986)

Without constant attempts to redefine and reassert publicly their nature and purpose, universities become frozen in internal mythology, in a complacent self-perpetuation. . . . When they are not challenged within themselves to justify themselves, to themselves as well as to the society they serve; when they are not . . . constantly urged to examine their presuppositions, their processes and acts, they stiffen up and lose their evolving complementarity to other American institutions.
(A. Bartlett Giamatti, former President of Yale University. "A Free and Ordered Space: The Real World of the University" as excerpted in the Opinion section of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9 November 1988.)

What's relevant is that an institution that has as its primary mission research, scholarship, investigation, and inquiry knows so little about itself. . . . Higher education is a black box. You go in, and come out the other side. You don't know what happened in it. . . . What we're trying to communicate in California is an urgency. . . . We have a breakdown of the K-12 system. . . . We have a crisis in minority enrollment. . . . Just because we're [talking about assessment] doesn't mean that we want to impose something; we want to invite the leadership of academic institutions to help create the future leadership of the country.
(Assemblyman Tom Hayden, dialogue with John Ashcroft moderated by Frank Newman. AAHE National Conference, March 1987)

We have a responsibility to communicate to the public how well we're doing, regardless of whether we are mandated to do so. . . . It's clear from our behavior that we think we know what students should know. It's not credible to declare that we do not. We cannot face the public schools and say: "We produce 70% of your teachers, but we can't certify their competence." If we are to hold up our end of the commitment to improve public education, we must press forward with student outcomes assessment regardless of how primitive these efforts may be. We cannot take the position that we're so perfect that we can't improve our own teaching.
(Vice Chancellor Lee R. Kerschner. 1988 CSU Systemwide Conference on Student Outcomes Assessment, November 1988)

Elected representatives and governing boards have the right and responsibility to receive timely, accurate and useful information about the performance and effectiveness of institutions supported through taxation. Traditional modes of communicating such information do not report the outcomes of student enrollment at colleges and universities in terms related to the goals and objectives of the respective institution's educational programs. Where this does occur, it is usually unsystematic and anecdotal.

Actions of Governmental and Professional Agencies

At the Federal Level

Government response to these pressures identified above has been a vigorous call for reform of undergraduate education and a much expanded role for evaluation. The following ten states have adopted mandatory outcomes assessment programs at the postsecondary level: Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Other states, including California, have asked coordinating boards to study assessment and advise them about the desirability of imposing similar requirements. At least one state system, the State University of New York, is moving toward implementation of assessment programs for instructional improvement in the absence of a state mandate.

Most states, including California, have instituted mandatory testing for prospective teachers. Efforts to develop a national teachers exam are underway. The National Governors' Association has made strong recommendations regarding state government's need to fix accountability for educational quality. The Education Commission of the States and virtually every national professional organization in higher education have devoted major conferences to assessment.

The U.S. Department of Education has responded to these pressures by revising the "Secretary's Procedures and Criteria for Recognition of Accrediting Agencies"--guidelines affecting the distribution of federal funds to postsecondary institutions--to require student outcomes assessment. Section 602.17 contains the following new guideline for determining whether accrediting agencies are making a satisfactory effort to evaluate the educational effectiveness of postsecondary institutions or programs:

- Determining that institutions or programs document the educational achievements of their students . . . in verifiable and consistent ways, such as evaluation of senior theses, reviews of student portfolios, general educational assessments (e.g., standardized test results, graduate or professional school test results, or graduate or professional school placements), job placement rates, licensing examinations results, employer evaluations, and other recognized measures;

- Determining the extent to which institutions or programs broadly and accurately publicize . . . the [educational objectives consistent with its mission], the assessment measures described above, the information obtained through those measures;

- Determining the extent to which institutions or programs systematically apply the information obtained through the measures described above . . . toward steps to foster enhanced student achievement . . ..

At the Regional Level

In its January 1988 *Handbook of Accreditation*, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges incorporates revisions requiring the collection and reporting of outcomes assessment information.

- Standard 2.C requires each institution to demonstrate that it has "developed the means for evaluating how well, and in what ways, it is accomplishing its purposes as the basis for broad-based, continuous planning and evaluation." Included among the suggested

procedures and measures used to evaluate instructional programs are: changes in students' academic achievement; peer evaluation of educational programs; structured interviews with students and graduates; changes in students' values; pre- and post-testing of students; surveys of students, graduates and employers; student scores on standardized or locally constructed examinations; performance of graduates as indicated by measures appropriate to the field of the major.

- Standard 4.A requires universities to specify clearly for each field of study the: "subject matter to be covered, the intellectual skills and learning methods to be acquired, and the affective and creative capabilities to be developed." They must also demonstrate that "efforts are undertaken to develop and implement ways to measure the educational effectiveness" of academic programs.

At the State Level -- The Legislature

The California Legislature has, to date, enacted four pieces of legislation directly related to student outcomes assessment:

- Assembly Concurrent Resolution 141 (Hayden 1986) required the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) to develop, in consultation with representatives of the public postsecondary systems, recommendations regarding "talent development, value-added, and performance-based budgeting approaches to measuring and improving the quality of education in California."

- The Budget Act of 1987 incorporated language of intent requiring The California State University to report progress made toward adoption and implementation of "comprehensive assessment mechanisms for evaluating student learning, program effectiveness and institutional accomplishment of mission."

- Assembly Bill 2016 (Hayden 1987) directed CPEC to develop and present options for "measuring and implementing talent development or value added approaches to higher education and for an incentive funding approach designed to develop appropriate methods of assessing the teaching and learning process."

- Senate Bill 148 (Bergeson 1987) directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to adopt new standards and requirements for earning a teaching credential. Central to the new credentialing process is a shift from program approval to comprehensive assessments of individual candidates as the basis for granting credentials.

In its final report, *California Faces . . . California's Future: Education for Citizenship in a Multicultural Democracy* (March 1989), the Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education recommends the funding and initiation of three kinds of assessment programs:

- An intersegmental assessment project, developed under the aegis of CPEC, aimed at increasing: the numbers of currently underrepresented minority students, the retention rates of all postsecondary students, and the number of women and minority faculty in regular appointments.

- A comprehensive "Student Tracking System," under CPEC direction, to collect data from all California postsecondary students.

- Campus-based student outcomes assessment programs, developed by the faculty of each public college and university, to understand the "cognitive and substantive development of students."

The California Postsecondary Education Commission

The California Postsecondary Education Commission prepared two assessment-related studies in response to Legislative requests. *Funding Excellence in California Higher Education* (March 1987) clarifies terminology, outlines several model programs, and formulates six guiding principles which should guide state policy development in assessment. The second study, *Beyond Assessment: Enhancing the Learning and Development of California's Changing Student Population* (approved December 1988), describes current assessment practices in California, discusses value-added/talent-development assessment methods, and recommends that the Legislature establish a California challenge grant program "to support initiatives for improving teaching and learning in higher education, including the development of institutional assessment plans."

CHAPTER THREE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSING STUDENT OUTCOMES IN THE CSU

This chapter describes the reasons for adoption of twelve principles that guided the Committee in responding to external agencies and proposing recommendations for CSU policy on outcomes assessment.

Assessment and Diversity: For What Purposes Should Assessment Be Done?

Many of the pressures for assessment arise from a concern that the baccalaureate degree has lost any common meaning. In attempting to address this concern, universities run the risk of creating a different problem: they may damage that academic diversity that makes individual faculty and institutions unique and causes knowledge to advance. The balance between common standards and beneficial academic diversity is delicate and easily distorted.

There is indeed evidence to support the concern about lack of common meaning in the bachelor's degree and in all its components: general education, basic skills, the major. These criticisms, often carefully researched, have been brought to the attention of the academy by respected members of its ranks in responsible and constructive forms. The rigorous self-examination called for in such analyses as *Involvement in Learning* and *Integrity in the College Curriculum* cannot be ignored. It would be ironic, however, if the California State University were to respond to these legitimate demands by adopting the strategies of other states which have sought to remedy basic skills deficiencies by imposing large-scale programs and examinations that standardized the content and sequence of instruction at the cost of that academic diversity that other nations have long envied and sought to emulate. For one thing, The California State University has already implemented reforms in writing, mathematics, and general education. For another, the arguments for academic diversity are valid.

The values and traditions represented in the community of America's 3,000 postsecondary institutions reflect the pluralism of American society. The faculties of these institutions are geographically dispersed, free from the centralizing influence of a national ministry, responsive to the manifold interests and needs of the communities in which they are located, stimulated by association with colleagues in independent disciplinary societies, and governed by boards representative of a broad range of constituencies. These circumstances, and a widely shared belief in the value of academic freedom, have enabled American faculty to pursue and transmit knowledge as each individual sees fit.

Each faculty member brings to the classroom a unique collection of diverse knowledge, views, and interests. Courses of the same name may resemble each other only in some respects, depending on the instructor. Students completing a major in a specific field will possess some knowledge in common with other students completing that major; there will assuredly be much knowledge they do not have in common, however, owing to their experience with a different faculty. This intellectual and programmatic diversity is the particular strength of American higher education. And it is this diversity that faculty believe is threatened by centrally developed and administrated assessment programs.

Measurement of students' performance against specific criteria or norms tends to standardize and homogenize student learning. If institutions are rated, punished or rewarded on the basis of specific indicators of student learning, they will make whatever adjustments are necessary to meet the performance expectations measured by those indicators. This may be all to the good when the goal is to increase student competency in mathematics or writing, but it is enormously destructive of the innovation that occurs in academic disciplines when individual faculty strive to question or expand the frontiers of their disciplines and push their students to do likewise.

Assessment programs can be designed to provide evidence of students' progress toward meeting the educational goals of programs and institutions while preserving and nurturing academic diversity. The growing literature on assessment provides outstanding examples of programs incorporating thoughtful approaches and yielding information which can improve teaching and learning. Such approaches are consistent with the ethos of the academy, where the process of collecting evidence and reflecting on its meaning is a habit of mind and a principal strategy of academicians.

Because of its concern that inappropriate models be avoided but that the benefits of assessment be available to CSU campuses, the Advisory Committee adopted the following principles:

- **The only legitimate purpose of assessing student outcomes is to improve teaching, learning and academic advising at the individual, course, program, and/or institutional level. Data from outcomes assessment programs will not be used for cross-campus rankings or comparisons of individual faculty.**

- **Unique assessment models, tied to a multiplicity of goals represented by the different institutions and incorporating the principles adopted by the Committee, are appropriate to the CSU.**

Assessment and Complexity: What Should Be Assessed?

The most important outcomes of higher education are difficult to assess in reliable and affordable ways. Just as teaching at its most inspired is as much art as science, drawing upon and stimulating the creative as well as analytic resources of the mind, so can the university experience as a whole be infinitely more than the sum of its separate courses and requirements. Among the most compelling arguments for the value of higher education is its potential to inculcate disciplined curiosity, tolerance, ethical commitment and self-esteem, qualities that do not lend themselves to affordable assessment.

Valid assessment using standardized instruments is possible in some areas. Basic skills in writing, computation and reasoning can be (and are) evaluated appropriately and economically using standardized tests.

In the major field, tests of students' knowledge fail to identify strengths and weaknesses in such important dimensions as reactivity, enthusiasm, adaptability, and perseverance, and are inadequate as indicators of how well institutions are preparing students to continue study or begin their careers. To obtain reasonably complete and valid measures of progress toward the goals of the major, a variety of outcomes have to be assessed through a variety of modes. Measures of student achievement in the absence of contextual information are of little use for improving teaching and learning.

Although concern about students' general intellectual development has motivated several states to require its assessment, there are no generally accepted methods to measure it effectively. Evidence suggests that programs or instruments designed to measure comprehensive knowledge or intellectual growth apart from a particular curriculum in fact produce results more indicative of students' natural abilities or socioeconomic backgrounds.

In view of the complex nature of the most important outcomes of higher education and of the strong influence of the variables that contribute to it, the Advisory Committee adopted the following principles:

- **Meaningful outcomes assessment must be multivariate if it is to provide valid information to campuses for their use in improving academic programs and modifying institutional practices and for evaluating their effectiveness. Standardized tests provide specific, but limited kinds of information.**

- **Campuses need to consider, as part of an assessment program, student characteristics and academic program variables that affect student learning. Where these variables can be monitored using systemwide databases, applicable data should be provided to the academic departments.**

- **A full student outcomes assessment program will take into consideration such factors as: academic advising, counseling and career planning, laboratories, libraries, housing, financial aid services, extracurricular activities, health services, campus social life, and the quality and quantity of student contact with faculty.**

Responsibility for Assessment: Who Should Assess?

Student outcomes assessment programs are based on two major premises: 1) Changes that occur during students' formal education are attributable in some part to the institution(s) they attend, and in particular to the academic and support programs with which they are associated. 2) It is possible to obtain global measures of important outcomes--e.g., cognitive development, skills acquisition, attitudinal changes, values

clarification--and to link them to institutional factors. Aggregate measures of what students actually know, believe, and do, provide information for analyzing the effects of programs and planning for changes to improve them.

To be useful, assessment programs require personal and institutional responsiveness to the information generated. If the evidence produced through an assessment program is perceived to be peripheral to the interests and efforts of the faculty, the students or the campus administration, it will not command their respect or attention. In some mandated assessment programs, employment of standardized tests selected and developed by persons outside the institution has led to changes that were unintended and contrary to the broader concerns underlying the programs' adoption. The motives of outside agencies were perceived as anti-intellectual. Stimulation of campus dialogue about institutional excellence and improvement and the means to attain it were not reported as outcomes of this approach.

To contribute significantly to the quality of educational programs in the CSU, outcomes assessment programs must be designed to measure those educational dimensions identified by the faculty, the students and the administration as most important. The university is a collection of rich cultures, each of which must be served by an outcomes assessment policy.

Persuaded by examples of both beneficial and injurious assessment plans, and mindful of the need to place any new tools for improving educational programs in the hands of those responsible for them, the Advisory Committee adopted the following principles:

- **Programs to assess student outcomes should be campus-based, faculty-centered, and student-responsive.**

- **Faculty of the individual campuses have the primary responsibility for deciding how to assess student learning. This extends to the design or selection and administration of assessment methods, the interpretation of the results, and how the data will be used to improve programs.**

- **Consistent with the principle of institutional responsibility, the resources appropriated for assessment should support the development and operation of programs at the campus level. System and State efforts should be directed to helping campuses devise assessment programs. For this reason, the CSU opposes creation of a centrally administered State assessment program.**

- **Data collected through institutional assessment programs should be governed by recognized codes of ethics treating research with human subjects.**

The Priority of Assessment: At What Cost Should Assessment Be Done?

Higher education in America serves a multitude of social and personal purposes. Public universities in particular are seen as the vehicle for accomplishing an enormous range of services critical to the well-being of the community, region, state and nation. These expectations translate into competing demands upon postsecondary institutions and upon their primary resource, the faculty.

CSU faculty are expected to perform a variety of tasks. Chief among these is their obligation to teach effectively. The tasks associated with effective teaching are multiplying as discoveries resulting from research on teaching and learning are applied in the classroom. Examples of these necessary but time-consuming activities to improve instruction include: added time for academic advising; one-to-one student contacts in recognition of the benefits of direct interaction in improving the achievement and persistence of students; and the integration of technologies into the discipline as a means of promoting student learning. Because there is evidence of program improvement when faculty spend time in evaluating programs with which they are associated, the CSU now requires faculty to devote time to this end. The use of assessment to promote learning and assist in evaluating program effectiveness is another, recent result of research on effective practices.

Each of these important instructional tasks requires time investments on the part of faculty who are conscientious about being effective teachers. It is unrealistic to expect faculty to assume these additional responsibilities--often as pioneers on behalf of their colleagues--without some relief from other obligations. In other words, engagement in outcomes assessment represents a cost in terms of faculty workload.

There are also opportunity costs at the institutional level. For example, time and resources spent on assessment might prevent

investigation of other variables associated with institutional excellence. Class size represents another dimension of the cost-benefit equation. Some of the most effective approaches to assessment (oral presentations, portfolios, field experiences, written essays) require small class size as a means of improving the quality and quantity of student interaction with faculty. The decision to pursue any of these priorities must be based upon a careful evaluation of the costs and the foregone opportunities to pursue other means of improving institutional effectiveness. To assure consideration of these factors, the Advisory Committee adopted the following principles:

- **Student outcomes assessment, when appropriately carried out, is just one of several institutional practices that must exist in order to achieve educational excellence. Student outcomes assessment should be linked with the academic program review process presently mandated by the CSU Board of Trustees.**

- **While the evaluation of student learning is a regular faculty responsibility, implementation of *comprehensive* assessment programs will add significantly to faculty workload and will be costly. These costs must not be borne directly by students. Supplemental funding is essential to the development and operation of effective assessment programs. In the absence of adequate support, program implementation must be limited.**

- **Before substantial resources are requested for, or invested in, comprehensive assessment programs, it must be established that they provide effective means to improve the quality of educational programs. Because of their high cost and the need to evaluate their effectiveness, assessment programs should be implemented *experimentally* and *incrementally* within the CSU. It should be noted that assessment has the potential of identifying problems in educational programs that require additional resources for solution.**

The "assessment movement," as it came into being in the mid-eighties, is the offspring of parents from very different cultures: one, native to the academy, concerned primarily with being the best possible alma mater; the other, from beyond the walls, worried that the baccalaureates the academy sends forth are inadequately prepared to meet the challenges they must surmount for the good of all. In search of accountability, the latter discovered the former and recognized immediately their common interest in quality.

Given their disparate histories, customs and languages, it is not surprising that the associates of each view the new alliance with suspicion. The relationship is tense. Mutual commitment to quality has kept them together; disputes over how to define and measure it often divides them. To achieve their respective goals, each must understand and respect the other's motives and work diligently to help the other comprehend the complexity and implications of actions taken or contemplated.

There are inherent antagonisms between the notion of simple indices of performance and the goals of higher education. To attain the one, the other must be sacrificed. That is not to say, however, that educational quality cannot or should not be measured, or that its goals must be compromised in order to communicate them. The natural links between assessment and the values of the academy need to be reaffirmed in a more public context and internalized within the academy. The values of diversity and complexity need to be reasserted and effectively communicated beyond the academy.

After lengthy study and discussion about the benefits and risks of student outcomes assessment, the Committee concluded that: 1) student outcomes assessment programs, of the kind recommended in this report, have significant potential for improving teaching and learning; 2) the CSU cannot afford to ignore educational practices and strategies, including student outcomes assessment, that show great promise for the improvement of teaching and learning; and 3) where they have been demonstrated to be effective, it is the responsibility of CSU faculty and administrators to adopt them as appropriate to the classroom, the discipline, and the campus.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT POLICY

The following recommendations seek to balance the need for competent assessment with the need to preserve diversity, complexity, and faculty responsibility for the quality of academic programs. The recommendations are organized around four major goals: improving teaching and learning, improving assessment, improving communication with students, and obtaining support for assessment. They recommend integrative assessment practices at the level of the individual student or faculty member, program or department, campus and system.

Assessment for Improving Teaching and Learning

At the Level of the Individual Student or Faculty Member:

1. **Faculty should design evaluations of student performance in their courses to include elements that assess students' achievement in terms of the academic goals of departments and programs.**

Tests given in classes typically measure how well students have met specific course objectives. They are used, often in combination with evaluations of other dimensions of student performance, for purposes of assigning a final grade in a course. The results of tests and other assignments provide information essential for analyzing the effectiveness of instruction. If evaluations are devised to include them, results can also indicate how well students are acquiring the mastery of content, skills and attitudes expected of prospective graduates in the particular field of study. By carefully embedding measurements of specific programmatic outcomes in appropriate courses, faculty can evaluate student's progress toward attainment of the broader goals of the discipline or program without burdening students or themselves with additional assessment requirements.

At the Level of the Department or Program:

2. **The faculty of each department or program should have ways of evaluating student attainment in the major that go beyond the evidence provided by course grades.**

Although the CSU professes knowledge of the discipline to be important, current practices do not generally assess to what extent students acquire it. Students often complain of a bewildering mosaic of demands and of the lack of opportunity to discover the patterns which lend coherence and meaning to them. The relationship of courses to major programs and to general curricular goals and such learned abilities as effective written and oral communication and critical thinking remains unclear and unarticulated. One way of assessing such attainment is to require, in individual majors, a curricular component which calls upon students to integrate general and specialized learning and to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the field of study appropriate to the degree level. This component could be designed to help students approach their academic experience from a unifying and creative perspective and to permit faculty to observe and monitor the effectiveness of departmental programs.

In assessing comprehensive knowledge of the discipline, faculty may wish to consider: oral presentations requiring synthesis and integration; senior projects requiring research, scholarship or creative activities appropriate to the discipline; portfolio development; integrative studies and field experiences; simulations and case studies requiring attention to the ethical, historical and philosophical foundations of the disciplines.

At the Campus Level:

3. **The faculty of each CSU campus should have mechanisms to assess how well students are meeting the goals of the General Education program of the university.**

The General Education program is central to the quality of all CSU undergraduate degree programs. Responsibility for realizing its educational goals, however, is divided among many different academic constituencies, including the California Community Colleges. For these reasons, there is a need for mechanisms to assess students' progress toward attaining General Education objectives as defined in Executive Order 338 and in the General

Education Transfer Curriculum. Information obtained from these assessments should be systematically utilized in periodic reviews of campus General Education programs and in evaluating the preparation of transfer students who have completed CSU General Education requirements in whole or in part at other institutions.

4. Faculty, students and academic administrators should work together to develop a campus plan for coordinating and supporting outcomes assessment activities which examine the interaction between academic programs, student services, and the campus environment.

In *California Faces . . . California's Future*, the Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education calls for "campus-based student outcomes assessment intended to understand both the cognitive and substantive development of students, as well as their opinions concerning their educational experience" and suggests that such programs include "a wide range of issues (quality of instruction, campus housing, effectiveness of student services)." Accreditation standards of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges now require each postsecondary institution to "measure the educational effectiveness of programs" as one means of demonstrating that it has developed procedures for "evaluating how well, and in what ways, it is accomplishing its purposes." Student outcomes assessment programs can meet these expectations if they are developed around the goals of each campus and with the participation of the constituencies whose contributions are to be evaluated.

At the System Level:

5. The CSU should seek to restrict the proliferation of new, standardized tests, encouraging instead the development and use of approaches to assessment that address programmatic needs and curricular goals.

One major consequence of educational reform in California has been the adoption of an increasing number of tests as prerequisites for students to complete and progress beyond specific educational levels. While each new testing requirement was conceived and implemented to address important concerns, the cumulative effect is to burden students with a series of isolated, often duplicative testing requirements, each of which harbors the potential for driving curricular development and instructional practices in divergent directions. The CSU should work toward the adoption of integrative assessment programs which reduce the number of tests demanded of students while making the results of each useful for multiple purposes. Such an approach is particularly desirable in the assessment of entry-level skills for purposes of academic advisement and placement, and in determining the readiness of students to enter postbaccalaureate professional programs.

Research for Improving Assessment

At the Level of the Individual Student or Faculty Member:

6. Each CSU faculty member should review current student evaluation practices for possible improvement in light of evolving research on teaching and learning.

Teaching is the primary mission of The California State University, and assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. Research on cognition, motivation and performance assessment is growing and becoming more sophisticated. This literature is important to the CSU in meeting its primary mission of providing quality instruction for an increasingly diverse student population. CSU faculty would benefit by having access to the findings of assessment research, thereby enhancing their understanding of the uses and limitations of various modes of instruction and evaluation. Better, not necessarily more, assessment should be the goal.

At the Level of the Department or Program:

7. CSU campuses should encourage some faculty in each academic department to engage in assessment research related to teaching and learning.

Most departments do not have, among their faculty, experts in evaluation and assessment. One means for departments to acquire such resident expertise is to encourage faculty to pursue scholarly activities related to instruction. Engagement in student outcomes assessment is consistent with both the teaching and the research responsibilities of CSU faculty. It represents the application of the principles of scholarly inquiry to the teaching-learning process and to other environmental factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the effectiveness of educational programs. While the

object of such research may represent a new direction for many faculty, the rationale and methodology for pursuing such study are grounded in and supportive of the values and traditions of the disciplines.

At the Campus Level:

8. **Academic and research administrators should actively assist faculty to secure resources to engage in the development of, and research on, assessment related to teaching and learning.**

Progress toward the development and adoption of assessment approaches depends in part upon the availability of supplementary resources to fund professional and curricular development activities. Prior to the receipt of specific funding for this purpose, departments should consider utilizing resources that may be temporarily targeted toward the creation of assessment programs. Possible sources of support for assessment activities include lottery and professional development funds, systemwide grant programs, state and federal grant programs, and assigned time.

At the System Level:

9. **The Office of the Chancellor should assist campuses in establishing new outcomes assessment programs and in improving current assessment practices through the dissemination of information about assessment methodology and research.**

The process of building consensus on policies and practices for measuring program effectiveness includes providing access to information and expertise in its interpretation. The Office of the Chancellor should support campus efforts to acquire and exchange information about assessment through systemwide programs. The Institute for Teaching and Learning is the logical sponsor for a variety of assessment related activities, including: systemwide and/or regional (tele)conferences, workshops, research projects. Other programs that may be appropriate include: Academic Program Improvement, the Lottery Revenue Program, and the Teacher-Scholar Summer Institute.

Assessment for Improving Communication With and About Students

At the Level of the Individual Student or Faculty Member:

10. **Students should receive the results of assessments of their performance in a timely fashion, with adequate information to permit accurate interpretation.**

Students are entitled to know and understand the results of any measurement of their academic performance. The results of examinations and tests need to be interpreted to students to guide their future efforts. The pertinence of particular tests to the broader goals of courses or programs, and of performance on these measurements as an indicator of progress toward meeting the expectations of the program, must also be made clear.

The CSU has a very diverse student population. There is a need for faculty to recognize that the way they convey evaluative information to students can be conducive to learning or it can be very harmful to learning, depending on individual student characteristics. Faculty should discuss test results in class and advise individual students regarding their progress, with awareness of and sensitivity to the complex relationships between testing and personal variables, and the impact of this interaction on individual students.

At the Level of the Department or Program:

11. **Each academic department should utilize information about how well students are meeting overarching program goals to a) advise students at key points in the major, and b) analyze and improve the effectiveness of academic programs.**

The fragmentary character of students' educational experience is often mirrored by faculty's fragmentary understanding of students' educational development. Departments and programs should ensure that faculty evaluations of students' performance yield information to assess the extent to which students are making acceptable academic progress. The availability of such evidence will enable faculty to discharge, more effectively, their individual responsibilities as academic advisors and their collective responsibility for recommending students for degrees. This information will also be useful in understanding the effectiveness of program

components and in evaluating changes introduced to improve them.

At the Campus Level:

12. The administration of each CSU campus should assist academic departments in a) collecting, analyzing and reporting information about current and former students' characteristics, development and attainment of degree and program goals, b) better utilizing data currently collected by the campus, and c) incorporating these outcome measures in academic program review.

Assessment of student learning in the major and General Education, and of other programs and services to support students' progress toward degree completion, can produce new information for analyzing and improving institutional performance. Its value is limited, however, if not accompanied by an understanding of student characteristics and opinions and how these relate to general institutional patterns, particularly over time. Campuses regularly collect demographic and institutional data that could help provide such a context, but often do not make it available in formats useful for evaluating the impact and quality of specific programs. Campus offices involved in gathering and utilizing relevant data, including alumni associations, should work with academic departments and student services to identify and provide important information currently not available for this purpose.

At the System Level:

13. The Office of the Chancellor should assist campuses in acquiring data in a format useful to departments in their self-analyses.

Survey information is essential to understanding the impact of educational institutions on the lives of students who attend them. The usefulness of such information is enormously increased when data are scientifically and systematically collected over time and with attention to demographic characteristics. Presently, surveys of current and former students are undertaken at various levels for various purposes and with varying degrees of sophistication. At the department level, opinion surveys are typically conducted in connection with self-studies for program review and accreditation. Campus alumni associations regularly seek information about former students for the specific purposes of the associations. Two systemwide surveys are periodically done to provide aggregate information about CSU students.

In the interest of greater efficiency and of making high quality data available to all campuses and departments, the Office of the Chancellor should work with the campuses to develop and administer surveys to produce data to meet the needs identified in these recommendations. Custody of data so generated should be the responsibility of the unit of analysis; e.g., data pertaining to departments are returned to the respective departments, campus data to the respective campus. Use of the data by persons or offices external to the unit of analysis should be at the discretion of the unit. Where such use is approved, anonymity of the data should be safeguarded.

System Support for Assessment

14. Developing and implementing campus-based student outcomes assessment programs of the integrative nature proposed in these recommendations are costly. The Office of the Chancellor should work with CSU campuses, the Academic Senate, and educational constituencies outside the CSU to acquire adequate resources for this purpose above and beyond the funding for current programs.

The successful acquisition of resources for assessment requires a prior consensus that assessment programs will serve important educational goals. The process of building consensus on policies and practices for measuring program effectiveness demands committed leadership, access to information and expertise in its interpretation, and the ability to release faculty temporarily from regular workload obligations to devote adequate time and effort to this purpose. Implementation of programs will require additional fiscal support for faculty development activities, planning and coordination, instrument design and administration, analysis and publication.

Successful operation of comprehensive institutional assessment programs is ultimately dependent upon reliable, predictable funding of the kind provided through an augmentation of the budget for instruction. A major purpose of the "Challenge Grants," as proposed in the CPEC study, *Beyond Assessment: Enhancing the Learning and Development of California's Diverse*

Students, is to provide multiple-year funding to campuses for establishing student outcomes assessment programs. The Office of the Chancellor should seek legislative adoption of the recommendations of this CPEC study as one source of fiscal support for developing and implementing assessment programs on CSU campuses.

Adoption Of Assessment Policy Framework

15. The Board of Trustees of The California State University should: a) adopt the Statement of Guiding Principles for CSU Policy on Student Outcomes Assessment as the framework for developing outcomes assessment programs in the CSU; b) adopt the recommendations contained in this report; c) recognize that the adoption of these recommendations will require additional resources and support the office of the Chancellor in building a level of consensus regarding the priority of assessment adequate to pursue successfully the acquisition of budgetary resources to implement these recommendations.

APPENDIX A

CURRENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

EXCERPT FROM A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTAL LANGUAGE TO THE 1987-88 BUDGET ACT

CURRENT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The following inventory of established CSU programs is limited to systemwide assessment programs and practices. It does not include a discussion of traditional faculty grading practices, the most basic and important means for evaluating students' educational progress and attainment, or of assessment programs and activities existing or being piloted on the nineteen campuses.

Evaluation of Student Performance and Development

The English Placement Test (EPT)

In May 1976, the Board of Trustees, recognizing the need for greater attention to the problem of student writing skills, approved the establishment of a systemwide writing proficiency and diagnostic examination for entering lower-division students. The policy authorized support for developmental writing programs to remediate the writing competency of underprepared students. It also fixed responsibility for oversight and periodic evaluation and reporting.

Since its first administration in September 1977, the English Placement Test has been taken by approximately 350,000 students. Its effectiveness in meeting policy goals was the subject of a major evaluation undertaken with the aid of external consultants during academic year 1985/86. After reviewing information and data connected with this complex program, the EPT Evaluation Committee found that:

- The EPT is a valid instrument for the measurement of the writing skills of entering students and for placement in appropriate composition courses;
- Study data suggest a positive relationship between success in writing skills and persistence at the University;
- The clearer identification of student needs and abilities made evident through the testing program has, on various campuses, led to curricular revisions, given direction to faculty research interests and prompted the establishment of supplemental assessment programs.

(*Report of the English Placement Test Evaluation Committee*, Office of the Chancellor, The California State University, December 1986)

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

The Writing Skills policy approved by the Board of Trustees in 1976 included a provision that all students demonstrate writing competency as a requirement for graduation and as a prerequisite to classified standing in graduate programs. The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Student Writing Skills, the task group charged with implementing the new policy, recommended against development of a common systemwide examination along the lines of the Placement Test. They were persuaded that the purpose of the requirement would be best served by an approach enabling campuses to tailor programs to suit local situations and particular needs of the disciplinary majors.

An evaluation of the implementation of the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement on each CSU campus through academic year 1986-87 was completed in October 1988. While ackowledging and identifying the need to continue efforts to improve it, the evaluator

concluded that "the GWAR is substantive, fair, rigorous, and appropriate as an upper-division measure of writing proficiency."

The Entry-Level Mathematics Examination (ELM)

To implement provisions of the new General Education-Breadth Requirements adopted by the Trustees in 1980, the chairs of the mathematics departments of the CSU campuses, with the support of campus administrations and the Academic Senate, recommended that a systemwide policy on entry-level mathematics skills be adopted and that a uniform examination be developed and given on all campuses to evaluate student entry-level skills.

The ELM must be taken and passed by all CSU students prior to enrollment in a course that satisfies the general education requirement in quantitative reasoning. Data collected since the exam was introduced in 1983 indicate that its use has contributed to improving the level of high school preparation for college math and, as a result of greater readiness and better placement, student performance in CSU math classes as well.

Assessment of students' writing and computational skills, as currently exemplified in the English Placement Test and the Elementary-Level Mathematics Examination, has enabled CSU campuses to do a better job of:

- determining the readiness of entering students to do college level work and communicating information on the effectiveness of preparatory programs to high schools;
- placing students in classes appropriate to their individual level of preparation;
- maintaining the quality of curriculum by establishing minimum criteria for baccalaureate-level courses.

Comprehensive Examinations for Licensure, Certification, or Advanced Study

Graduates of many CSU degree programs enter fields requiring completion of comprehensive examinations for licensure, certification or registration. Nursing, architecture, marriage and family counseling, and dietetics are examples of areas of employment to which access is controlled by state boards. CSU academic departments preparing students for entry into careers requiring licensure are keenly interested in the performance of their graduates on state examinations. Where resources and policy permit, this information is collected and reported in program review and accreditation studies.

CSU graduates applying for admission to graduate degree programs at other universities are often selected on the basis of their performance on comprehensive examinations of general knowledge and specialized knowledge in their field. Since graduate school acceptance rates are an important indicator of how well local programs are preparing students, many academic departments attempt to track their graduates' progress and include summaries of the information in self-studies.

Systemwide Surveys of Current and Former Students

Since 1975 The California State University has conducted a biennial employment survey of all spring graduates from all CSU campuses. The purpose of the survey is to provide faculty, counselors, students and prospective students with information on the employment of recent CSU bachelor's and master's degree recipients relevant to career and life

planning. The data collected in the Survey of Spring Graduates provide campuses with answers to such questions as:

- What do CSU students do after graduation?
- What are rates of employment for women, minorities and older graduates who seek employment?
- Do CSU graduates get the jobs for which their major programs prepare them?
- What are starting salaries for CSU graduates?
- How do CSU graduates find jobs?

Whereas the biennial spring employment survey attempts to document the status of students that have successfully completed academic programs in the CSU, the Student Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS) seeks information from currently enrolled students regarding:

- Life goals and educational priorities;
- Levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their academic and social experiences on campus;
- Obstacles or problems, whether institutional or personal in nature, which might hinder progress toward their educational goals.

Data collected through SNAPS allow campuses to compare opinions and characteristics of students from their own campus over time and with those of CSU students in general.

Evaluation of Program Quality

Program Review

The formal requirement for a qualitative review of existing academic programs has been in place in The California State University since 1971, when the Board of Trustees directed that each campus review each academic degree program on a periodic basis. In 1985, the General Education Advisory Committee, noting that the program review schedules did not incorporate a review of the effectiveness of the General Education program, asked campuses to devise separate, additional procedures to judge the quality of this component of the curriculum.

While the requirement to review all degree and general education programs is systemwide policy, criteria and procedures for conducting the review are unique to the respective campuses. Generally, program review begins with a departmental self-study (usually involving surveys of students, faculty and alumni) which is submitted to a School Dean or to a School review committee. An external reviewer or team of reviewers including experts in the discipline is typically invited to the campus to analyze the self-study, interview students, faculty and administrators, and to offer observations on program strengths and weaknesses.

Program review examines numerous aspects of the environment that are associated with and necessary to learning, and critical indicators of quality such as departmental grading practices, coherence of discipline coverage in the curriculum, and faculty involvement in scholarly and community affairs.

Institutional Accreditation

All campuses of The California State University have been accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Each institution undergoes a full review every tenth year and submits fifth-year reports midway in the cycle. In order to qualify for accreditation, campuses must meet nine standards.

The accreditation standards have been developed by the Commission to understand the unique aspects of an institution and its relative success both in achieving individuality and in meeting regional and national expectations. The nine complex and essential dimensions of an institution of higher education addressed in the standards encompass: institutional integrity, purpose, governance and administration, educational programs, faculty and staff, learning resources, student services and activities, physical resources and financial resources.

Program Accreditation

Currently, over two hundred CSU degree programs are accredited by some thirty specialized accrediting bodies. Each program accreditation involves site visits and accreditation standards in addition to the institutional accreditation reviews described above.

The specialized accrediting associations, all themselves accredited by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, are supported by many professional organizations or groups of such organizations. Included among these are: the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the American Medical Association, the National League for Nursing, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

APPENDIX B

CSU CAMPUS VIEWS REGARDING STATE INCENTIVE FUNDING PROGRAMS

A SUMMARY OF CAMPUS RESPONSES TO A REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION ON ASSEMBLY BILL 2016 (HAYDEN) "HIGHER EDUCATION TALENT DEVELOPMENT"

State of California
Memorandum

Trustees of The California State University

To: Members, CPEC Advisory Committee on State Incentive Funding Approaches

Date: January 22, 1988

From: Frank W. Young, Associate Dean
Academic Affairs, Plans

Subject: POLICY ISSUES AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO STATE INCENTIVE FUNDING: REPORT OF CONSULTATION WITH ACADEMIC LEADERS IN THE CSU

As agreed in October, CSU members of the Advisory Committee have undertaken to consult broadly with faculty and administrators from the campuses regarding State Incentive Funding Approaches for Promoting Quality in California Higher Education. Efforts to engage affected constituencies in discussions directly connected with the work of the Advisory Committee included the following:

- Chancellor Reynolds established a systemwide advisory committee on student outcomes assessment to examine assessment issues and make policy recommendations. Members of this committee include a campus president and academic vice president, three representatives of the Academic Senate, two representatives of the California State Student Association, and two members of the Chancellor's staff.

- The Academic Senate of the CSU discussed outcomes assessment at its annual systemwide conference in November and requested subsequent input from campus senates.

- Vice Chancellor Kerschner requested campus commentary on questions posed by the State Incentive Funding study. (A copy of Dr. Kerschner's memorandum is attached.)

- The California State Student Association addressed talent development and outcomes assessment in meetings of the Board of Directors over the last six months. In addition, CSSA has sponsored two student forums focussing on these issues.

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cc: Dr. Lee R. Kerschner
Members, CSU Advisory Committee on Students Outcomes Assessment

- An information presentation on assessment issues was made to the Board of Trustees of The California State University at its January meeting.

The CSU Advisory Committee on Student Outcomes Assessment convened on January 13 to review the responses of campuses to the question posed in Vice Chancellor Kerschner's memorandum and to provide guidance in the preparation of this report.

The campus responses confronted the Committee with an enormous wealth and diversity of perspectives and views regarding educational quality and how it might best be promoted through a State incentive funding plan. The recommendations listed below represent a homogenization of a substantial range of these views. Lost as a result of this process is a sense for the vitality and persuasiveness of the original formulations and with this much of the information value as well. A small number of campuses declined to reply to the request at this time, explaining that consultative processes could not be concluded within the time allowed.

Apart from strong consensus about fundamental purposes and principles, there is little common agreement regarding most of the key questions raised in the Prospectus. The points listed below reflect findings, opinions and recommendations contained in the campus responses as identified and synthesized by the committee in the short amount of available time.

It is clear that campus understanding of the question asked of them was not uniform: some respondents interpreted AB 2016 and the proposed State Incentive Program broadly to include approaches to improving educational quality beyond assessment; others understood the bill and the CPEC focus to be strictly limited to outcomes assessment.

To assure at least minimally representative character, the following summary reports recommendations made in one form or another by more than a single campus. For purposes of economy of presentation, similar recommendations differing as to level of implementation (e.g., departmental or university) are presented under only one rubric. The order of listing reflects generally the degree of consensus found in the separate campus replies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCENTIVE FUNDING BY LEVEL

AT THE COURSE LEVEL

Instructional Improvement

A majority of responding campuses expressed approval of a program that would make additional funds available to improve instruction. The recommendations included: assessment centers aimed at helping faculty assess/improve the effectiveness of their teaching/courses, applied research into factors affecting teaching and learning in specific disciplines, assessment of student learning in relation to course/program objectives, reduction in student-faculty ratio for certain types of instruction or students (to allow individualized attention for students with developmental needs).

Student Involvement in Learning

Funding to develop instructional materials and strategies aimed at involving students more actively in the learning process was recommended. A variety of approaches was suggested: e.g., student-faculty research, social service projects, faculty development activities aimed at changing modes of instruction and motivating students, interdisciplinary-integrative learning, cooperative learning.

AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Curricular Improvement

Support was recommended for activities designed to: enable faculty to define programmatic goals and develop assessment mechanisms appropriate to them; integrate critical thinking, verbal proficiency and international/multicultural perspectives into curricula; develop capstone/stepping stone courses; define articulation in terms of content mastery.

Diagnostic and Placement Testing

Substantial interest was expressed in external support to develop and administer, either through the department or the campus testing offices, additional diagnostic tests intended to provide information for accurate placement and referral of students and for collection of baseline data for program evaluation.

Academic Advising

Funding to improve the quality of academic advising was encouraged in some responses. The link between effective advising and efforts to retain and assist students from underrepresented groups was stressed. Advisement training and innovative approaches to improve and expand academic advisement were suggested.

Assessment in the Major

A few campuses approved the use of incentive funding to allow departments to assess the student learning and program effectiveness in the major provided the responsibility for

developing and administering the assessment and for utilizing the data in improving curricula and instruction remains with the faculty of the department.

Partnerships with Business, Industry and Government

The many educational benefits of integrating practical applications into the curricula of academic majors has long been recognized. Some campuses would like additional resources to support programs featuring student internships/practicums, community service components and programs enabling faculty and experts from outside academe to learn and teach in their counterparts' environments.

AT THE CAMPUS LEVEL

Educational Equity

Consensus among respondents was highest regarding the need to make our institutions more effective in meeting the educational requirements of students from underrepresented segments of the State's population. Clearly, CSU campuses regard this issue as a priority concern of all segments of California higher education and one which may be usefully addressed through a State incentive funding program. Specific suggestions as to what kinds of programs might be funded include support to:

- identify and address the factors that contribute to attrition of students who have potential to complete postsecondary education
- track the progress of individual students coming to, dropping out, and graduating from our campuses
- assess the individual/group learning styles of students
- expand peer support programs and increase tutorial services in basic skills and lower division GE programs
- improve/expand orientation and study skills programs
- develop assessment programs for oral communication, computational and critical thinking at the entry and exit levels

Underprepared Students

The problem of inadequately prepared and poorly motivated students was mentioned in several campus reports. Campuses recognize that these students are often educationally disadvantaged and represent, collectively, a significant element in the State's economic and political mainstream. Assistance through a State incentive funding program would provide additional resources to address this problem. Possible approaches, in addition those mentioned under one or more of the preceding headings, include:

- development/implementation of intervention strategies for high-risk students
- improvement of academic advising, personal counseling and other opportunities for individualized attention to students with remediational and adjustment needs
- partnership programs with secondary and middle schools to improve the academic preparation of educationally disadvantaged students

General Education

About half of the responding campuses expressed interest in outcomes assessment approaches to measuring the effectiveness of their General Education programs. The design and evaluation of such programs should be the primary responsibility of each institution's faculty and might involve collaboration with counterparts from community colleges in the respective campus service areas. Locally designed and administered programs might include a component common to all campuses of the system that would reflect the CSU general education-breadth requirements outlined in Title V.

International/Multicultural Education

The need to assure that CSU graduates acquire a useful understanding of the global context of major political and economic problems confronting the United States was evident in the responses of several campuses, as was the obligation to prepare students to live and work in a multiethnic, multicultural society. Supplementary resources would allow campuses to accelerate and intensify efforts towards these ends.

Integrating Existing Assessment Programs

Most of the campus reports allude to the many kinds of assessment currently employed that do, in fact, measure outcomes. Additional funding to integrate and utilize more systematically and publicly the data already collected was suggested as a valuable, cost-effective addition to current practices.

Faculty/Staff Development

Strong support was evidenced for use of incentive funds to support faculty and staff development activities targeted toward institutional priorities. Those mentioned included: use of instructional technologies, crosscultural communication, integrating writing and critical thinking across disciplines, applied research on domain-specific learning, alternative modes of instruction.

Expanding Student Surveys

Measures of student engagement/effort, moral and social development, and changes in behavior were identified as important outcomes, a better understanding of which would help institutions identify programmatic and environmental factors in need of improvement. Financial support for surveying students over time should be included in a State incentive plan to promote higher quality.

AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

Basic Skills Assessment and Development

Funding to measure and to enhance the development and retention of skills in oral communication, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning, using something like the English composition model already in place, was recommended by about half of the respondents. Most of them supported system-level assessment, though lesser numbers thought it would be more effective to do such evaluation at the campus level or on a

Statewide basis. (Rationales and programs to assure student retention of basic skills are mentioned above in the discussion of underprepared students.)

Assessment Technology

Mindful of the limitations of available instruments to measure student learning and development in any comprehensive way, some campuses saw support for research and development of evaluation tools as a major function for a State incentive funding program focussing on outcomes assessment. Resources should also be made available to enable the systems to monitor the cost-effectiveness of assessment programs.

AT THE STATE LEVEL

Longitudinal Data Collection

CSU campuses signaled very strong support for the funding of comprehensive longitudinal data collection systems. We know that students attending the CSU come with widely divergent backgrounds, preparations and aspirations. Enrollment, course-taking, degree progress and post-graduation employment patterns vary enormously. Systematic identification of these and other variables, many of which extend beyond the CSU admissions and enrollment databases and the resources of the system, would provide a powerful tool for more effective advising, counseling and for academic and student services planning.

Educational Policy

About a quarter of the responding campuses suggested that much in the way of creating conditions for improvement of quality could be accomplished through the funding of system- and/or state-level forums for discussion of educational issues with representatives of industry, government, the media as well as all segments of education. Such exchanges would enable academic leaders to gain broad societal perspectives regarding educational priorities and to inform key constituencies of the priorities and constraints undergirding policy development in higher education. One particular policy issue related to AB 2016 that could be addressed in such a forum would be the cost-benefit question connected with outcomes assessment: To what extend should funds be expended to obtain more exact measures of value added by institutions/programs versus use of these resources to improve directly the quality of the programs and the conditions for learning ?

Student-Faculty Ratio

Several campus responses suggested that budgetary formulas resulting in rather rigid production "quotas" of targeted student-faculty ratios was a principal constraint affecting the ability of CSU campuses to address effectively some of the problems noted above. Supplementary resources to permit lower ratios and/or reduced faculty teaching loads were recommended as an appropriate approach for a State program to promote higher educational quality.

Financial Aid

A second major constraint impinging upon campuses' ability to resolve problems cited in the discussion of educational equity and underprepared students is the dependency of many

students upon income generated from full- or nearly full-time employment at jobs unconnected with their studies. Resources to allow students to concentrate their energies on learning would, some campuses suggest, go far toward enhancing the educational experience and the value of the time spent on campuses for many of these students.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PRINCIPLES

Agreement on basic principles that should govern creation of a State incentive funding mechanism was far more evident than on how the funds ought to be used. Most respondents explicitly endorsed the six principles contained in the CPEC report, Funding Excellence in California Higher Education. Echoes of these principles recur in all of the campus responses.

Purposes of Outcomes Assessment

Without exception, campuses supported the view that assessment of student outcomes should serve the purpose of improving teaching and learning at the individual course, program and/or institution level. It should not be used for purposes of comparing the performances of any one of these to others or to norms.

Institutional Autonomy and Faculty Responsibility

There was near unanimous agreement regarding the need to assign to the faculty of the individual campuses the primary responsibility for designing, administering and interpreting the results of programs to assess student learning, program and institutional performance. The diversity of institutional missions and the rapid shifts in the demographics of the State require flexibility in approaches to measuring quality and effectiveness.

Multiple Measures

Meaningful outcomes assessment must be multivariate if it is to provide reasonably valid information for use in improving academic programs and modifying institutional practices and for evaluating program or institutional performance. Standardized tests provide valuable but very limited kinds of information that do not necessarily relate to career productivity.

Adequate, Supplemental Funding

A good deal of skepticism was expressed about the real source of fiscal support for outcomes assessment programs. All respondents concurred that the dollars for these purposes should be in addition to regular institutional budgets; most, however, thought that the money would be taken "off the top," resulting in a distribution of the costs to all campuses.

Fears were also evident that the real costs of implementing comprehensive assessment programs in terms of money, time and political stability have not been recognized or taken into consideration. Several CSU campuses have recent, apparently painful experience with underfunded efforts to implement subject-matter competency tests for students entering credential programs.

Cost-Benefit Ratio

A State incentive program of the kind under study should be structured in such a way as to minimize the resources required for its administration; i.e., the dollars should support development and operation of assessment, not the administrative apparatus charged with distributing supplementary funds to do so. (It was suggested that existing system grant programs--e.g., the merit-based instructional improvment funds--might be appropriate vehicles for administering funds targeted for encouraging assessment.)

A strong public commitment to careful analysis of the cost-effectivess of the outcomes assessment approach should be made if it is adopted as the goal of a State incentive plan.

Reductive Effects on Academic Programs

The CSU opposes the creation of an incentive funding approach that rewards institutions for producing simplistic, quantitative measures of student performance. Funding should go to institutions proposing to address complex educational problems in commensurate ways. Performance funding, as aconcept and as operates at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is not acceptable.

CAVEATS

Educational and Institutional Priorities

A major danger of targeting additional resources for assessment is that it reduces support for other programs to address concerns of high priority to the State, the system and the institutions. There was substantial consensus that additional money could be spent more effectively on approaches to improving quality not related to outcomes assessment.

Erosion of Diversity

Adoption of standardized testing as a prominent index of institutional quality across institutions within/between systems will cause a shift away from complex educational goals toward achieving good ratings as measured by assessment results. "Teaching to the test" and homogenization of curriculum are inevitable consequences of such an approach.

Distortions of Reality

The existence of comprehensive assessment programs does not guarantee improvement of quality. One cannot rely on summative evaluation approaches to achieve formative ends. Indices of quality derived from limited measures may be far more misleading than students' grade point average or other currently available measures.

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Chancellor
400 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802-4275
(213) 590-

Code: APPS 87-31

Date: October 28, 1987

Reply Requested by
January 11, 1988

To: Vice Presidents
Academic Affairs

From: Lee R. Kerschner
Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs

Subject: State Incentive Funding Approaches

Attached please find a copy of Assembly Bill No. 2016, "Higher Education Talent Development," that has been signed by the Governor. In accordance with the bill, the California Postsecondary Education Commission has established an Advisory Committee on State Incentive Funding Approaches for Promoting Quality in California Higher Education. Six members of that committee are from The California State University:

Dr. Bernie Goldstein, Academic Senate, CSU, San Francisco
Dr. Diane Halpern, CSU, San Bernardino
Dr. Glenn Irvin, CPSU, San Luis Obispo
Dr. Leigh R. Mintz, CSU, Hayward
Ms. Sherry Skelly, CSSA
Dr. Frank Young, Chancellor's Office

The anticipated outcomes of the CPEC study (for which a proposed prospectus is attached) are a list of quality improvement options or proposals designed to:

1. Stimulate institutional practices to promote quality in higher education;

2. Provide greater accountability for the quality and content of college instruction;

3. Understand better how the budget process can be used to improve the educational process.

As its title implies, Assembly Bill 2016 specifies that the options CPEC is to develop and present to the Legislature focus on measuring gains in student learning and on assessing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

In fulfilling its charge to develop State funding incentives to achieve these ends, AB 2016 requires CPEC to consult with "students, faculty, staff, and administrators at the state and local campus level." This provision is consistent with the guiding principles developed by the ACR 141 Task Force last year and incorporated into the text of the legislation (Section 66912). These principles recognize that "the definition and assessment of student outcomes and competency standards at the course, program and departmental level is primarily a faculty responsibility."

The CPEC advisory committee has ascertained that it will begin its work by requesting that as many faculty and administrators as possible be polled on the following question:

> How can incentive funding be used at the course, departmental, university, system and state levels to effect improvement in educational quality?

I am asking each campus to consider this complex question and to propose options amenable to incentive funding. In soliciting recommendations, campuses should keep in mind the legislative stipulation (page 5) that "State funding incentives to promote quality in California higher education should be funds that are supplementary to the institution's base budget . . .." Please return your recommendations to Dr. Frank Young by January 11, 1988.

To coordinate the CSU responses to the CPEC advisory committee, and to address related issues raised in supplemental budget language (copy attached), the CSU Assessment Advisory Committee is being established. Dr. Young will convey campus responses to this group whose members will be asked to compile the system report.

You may be interested to know that this question will be discussed with the campus Senate chairs when they meet at Asilomar on November 13, and will be a topic of discussion at an Academic Senate Retreat workshop on November 14. However, the Retreat discussions are not intended to produce campus or system responses.

Please call Dr. Frank Young at (213)590-5856 or ATSS 635-5856 if you have any questions.

LRK/na(APPSTWO:1161n)

Attachments: 2

Copies to:

Presidents
Associate Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs
Academic Senate, CSU
Chancellor's Office Staff
Campus Faculty Senate Chairs
CPEC Committee Representatives
CSU Assessment Advisory Committee Representatives
Chair, California State Student Association

APPENDIX C

SELECTED LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

SELECTED LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED

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